United Nations A/70/763

General Assembly

Distr.: General
26 February 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventieth session
Agenda item 20
Sustainable development

Letter dated 26 February 16 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you the attached information on the contribution of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to peace and stability in the region (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the seventieth session of the General Assembly under agenda item 20.

(*Signed*) Muzaffar **Madrakhimov**

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Annex to the letter dated 26 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Shanghai Cooperation Organization makes a valuable contribution to strengthening peace and stability in the region

The international influence of Uzbekistan is constantly growing thanks to robust development in all spheres, the policy of peace pursued by our Government and its consistent efforts to ensure security and stability in the region.

In Uzbekistan, which is steadily moving along its own development path under the leadership of President Islam Karimov, a strategic mechanism has been established to achieve the ambitious goals that have been set in order to join the ranks of the developed countries. As part of that process, Uzbekistan is focusing on international cooperation, including through authoritative international organizations, one of which is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Founded on 15 June 2001 in the Chinese city of Shanghai, SCO has become an authoritative international organization with a firm position, effective approaches and concrete objectives. The growing influence and authority of the Organization in solving current problems of global socioeconomic and international significance and in ensuring security, stability and sustainable development in the world has rightly contributed to the growing interest of many States in becoming SCO member States, observer States or dialogue partners.

Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan have been SCO member States since its founding. India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mongolia and Belarus participate in SCO as observer States, while Turkey, Sri Lanka, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia and Nepal have dialogue partner status. Following the summit held in Ufa, Russian Federation, last year, the process of the accession of India and Pakistan to SCO began.

The States members of SCO have been making significant efforts since its founding to strengthen relations based on mutual trust and good-neighbourliness, to develop effective bilateral and multilateral partnerships in trade, public policy, science and technology, and arts and culture, and to ensure security and stability in the region.

The principles of mutual trust and interest, equality, collegiality, respect for cultural diversity and a shared commitment to development are firmly upheld in the work of SCO.

SCO gives priority to supporting and developing regional economic cooperation, financing joint projects, promoting direct contacts between businesspeople and financial institutions, and developing cooperation in such areas as transportation, infrastructure, information technology and telecommunications, and banking and finance. Strengthening bilateral and multilateral links in the areas of science, education, innovative technologies, health care, agriculture, environment and security is also one of the key objectives of this international organization.

The two standing bodies of SCO — the Secretariat, which has its headquarters in Beijing, and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure, which has its headquarters in Tashkent — are working effectively. The Secretariat is the executive body of SCO and provides organizational, technical and information support to projects carried out under the Organization's auspices. The main tasks of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure are to develop measures to strengthen joint efforts to combat terrorism, extremism and separatism, trafficking in drugs and weapons, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and to deter threats to international and regional security.

In the rapidly changing modern world, no global problem can be resolved by a single State acting alone. For example, environmental and security issues require active international cooperation. It should also be noted that in April 2010, while Uzbekistan held the presidency of SCO, there was a major development in the work of SCO: during the visit of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to Uzbekistan, a joint declaration on cooperation was signed in Tashkent between the Secretariats of the United Nations and SCO.

The adoption of that important document, which marked the start of official cooperation between the United Nations and SCO, created a strong foundation for joint efforts in addressing current challenges.

According to the SCO rules and regulations, the presidency of SCO rotates annually among the member States. Uzbekistan assumed the presidency of SCO on 11 July 2015.

Uzbekistan is one of the founding States of SCO and has assumed the presidency of the Organization twice so far — in 2003/04 and 2009/10. During those periods, important instruments and decisions were adopted on improving the work of SCO and furthering cooperation in various areas under the auspices of the Organization.

During the current presidency in the year that marks the fifteenth anniversary of the Organization's founding, it is important to ensure the successful implementation of forward-looking programmes.

In accordance with the Decree of President Islam Karimov of 21 January 2016 on convening a meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of SCO member States in Tashkent and on other activities of SCO during the Uzbek presidency, Uzbekistan is actively preparing for that important event.

During its presidency of SCO, Uzbekistan, guided by prevailing practices, is strictly adhering to and abiding by the principles of the steady expansion and development of constructive and strong cooperation, in accordance with the interests of member States, in order to ensure that the Organization continues to build its influence in the international arena.

Through its presidency of SCO, Uzbekistan is making a valuable contribution to improving the effectiveness of the Organization by formulating and implementing initiatives to develop international links, strengthen the Organization's legal framework and ensure security and stability in accordance with the goals, tasks and principles set out in the SCO Charter.